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Fourth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

I. Introduction

1. By paragraph 22 of resolution 1289 (2000) of 7 February 2000, the Security Council requested me to continue to report to the Council every 45 days to provide, *inter alia*, assessments of security conditions on the ground so that troop levels and the tasks to be performed by the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) can be kept under review. The present report is submitted in accordance with that request and covers developments since my third report on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone issued on 7 March 2000 (S/2000/186). The present report also contains short-term recommendations for the stabilization of the current situation in Sierra Leone, including for an expansion of the capacity of UNAMSIL, beyond the level of 13,000 military personnel authorized by the Security Council in its resolution 1299 (2000) of 19 May 2000.

II. Political developments

2. During the reporting period, the peace process suffered a very serious setback as the result of the recent unprovoked armed attacks on United Nations peacekeepers, the detention of several hundred United Nations personnel, and the destruction of disarmament and demobilization camps by fighters of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Regrettably, those developments in May 2000, which are described in section VII of this report, overshadowed the limited progress achieved in the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement through a series of meetings of the parties and international stakeholders.

3. Prior to those events, President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah convened on 9 March a special meeting of the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration attended by the leader of RUF, Foday Sankoh, the leader of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council/ex-Sierra Leone Army (AFRC/ex-SLA), Johnny Paul Koroma, the Deputy Defence Minister and Civil Defence Force Coordinator, Chief Hinga Norman, UNAMSIL and the Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). At that meeting, all faction leaders agreed to grant unhindered access to all parts of the country to UNAMSIL, the humanitarian community and the entire population; to relinquish the territory they occupied and allow the Government to have full control over every part of the country; and to allow disarmament to take place in selected areas in the Eastern and Northern Provinces where disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) facilities were already in place, and thereafter in the rest of the country as facilities were made available. As a result of these efforts, the number of checkpoints maintained by the factions was reduced, and UNAMSIL was able to deploy to the RUF stronghold of Kailahun on 16 March. However, RUF fighters continued to obstruct UNAMSIL deployment to Koidu in the Kono District and the number of RUF ex-combatants reporting for disarmament remained very low. In addition, some checkpoints manned by the factions remained in place and continued to hinder movement by the humanitarian community and the general population.

4. On 20 March, at Freetown, ECOWAS convened a verification meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Principal Parties to the Lomé Agreement to follow up on the decisions reached at the special meeting on

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Sierra Leone held at Bamako on 1 March, which was covered in my third report. At the meeting in Freetown, the RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, stated that he accepted that UNAMSIL was the "neutral peacekeeping force" provided for in the Lomé Peace Agreement (S/1999/777, annex). This was considered a positive development, since RUF had previously questioned the presence of UNAMSIL peacekeepers in Sierra Leone.

5. The meeting on 20 March of the principal parties also set up a committee, headed by my Special Representative, Oluyemi Adeniji, to carry out an investigation into the seizure in January of weapons and equipment from Kenyan and Guinean troops by RUF and from the Kenyan contingent by AFRC/ex-SLA. The investigation committee held its first meeting on 31 March, but RUF failed to attend on the pretext that it was not involved in the seizure of the Guinean weapons, despite evidence to the contrary. The three seized Guinean armoured personnel carriers have been recovered, but the other weapons and equipment have yet to be returned.

6. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations visited Sierra Leone from 19 to 21 March to assess the operations of UNAMSIL and to convey to the parties the strong commitment of the United Nations to assist them in implementing the Lomé Agreement. He held meetings with UNAMSIL senior staff, President Kabbah and other government officials, Mr. Koroma, Mr. Sankoh, United Nations agencies and representatives of civil society. The Under-Secretary-General also visited Port Loko and Makeni, where he inspected UNAMSIL troops, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration camps and centres for former child combatants. He also visited Bamako, where he met with the President of Mali, Alpha Oumar Konaré, current Chairman of ECOWAS.

7. At the initiative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, a high-level donors conference on Sierra Leone was convened in London on 27 March, to affirm political support for the peace process and mobilize additional resources. The conference was co-chaired by the United Kingdom, the World Bank and the United Nations, which was represented by the Deputy Secretary-General. New pledges totalling some US$ 70 million were made, to support the peace process, in particular the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as well as humanitarian assistance. The conference reaffirmed the international community's continued and strong support for the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement and sent a strong message to the factions to fulfil their obligations under the Agreement. In particular, the rebels were called upon to put an end to the continuing human rights abuses, to disarm their combatants immediately, to release women and children still detained, and to allow safe and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance to all areas of the country. The participants also discussed the issue of elections and undertook to help to organize free and fair elections in Sierra Leone, as provided for under the Lomé Peace Agreement, on the clear understanding that elections would not be possible without significant progress on disarmament. I commend the Government of the United Kingdom for taking this important initiative.

8. During the reporting period, some progress has also been made with regard to the functioning of the various institutions envisaged in the Lomé Agreement. However, this continued to be hampered by a lack of resources. The Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development, chaired by Mr. Sankoh, did not produce a plan of action and there also appeared to be a lack of political consensus on its role vis-à-vis existing ministries. The Commission for the Consolidation of Peace led by Mr. Koroma, however, made a good beginning and organized several meetings of the parties and other stakeholders to promote reconciliation and discuss ways of moving the peace process forward. From 18 to 23 April, the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace convened a commanders peace conference at Bo to facilitate face-to-face meetings among the commanders of the factions and to build confidence and promote peace. The conference was well attended by all factions.

9. Mr. Sankoh appeared before the Parliament of Sierra Leone on 15 March to answer questions on issues impeding the peace process. All political parties represented in Parliament strongly criticized Mr. Sankoh for impeding the peace process. In his response, Mr. Sankoh asserted that he was committed to the peace process and attributed the current obstacles to progress, in particular the slow pace of disarmament, to the weakness of the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration; the lack of transportation facilities, inadequate disarmament, demobilization and reintegration facilities; and to unattractive incentives for the ex-

combatants. However, Mr. Sankoh claimed that he was ready to work with Parliament.

10. At various bilateral and multilateral meetings during the reporting period, Mr. Sankoh and other RUF leaders complained about certain aspects of the Lomé Agreement that had not been implemented. Specifically, they mentioned the fact that no RUF members had been appointed to positions in parastatal enterprises, the diplomatic service and any other public sector, under article IV of the Lomé Agreement. They also complained that too much attention was being focused on the disarmament provisions to the neglect of the political provisions of the Agreement. While there can be little doubt that the lack of cooperation on the part of RUF and Mr. Sankoh in particular was the main obstacle to the effective implementation of the Lomé Agreement, it is also true that the situation was not helped by the slow pace of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, as well as various political, administrative and other problems.

11. During the reporting period, there were unconfirmed reports of the formation of a new faction by a former RUF commander, Sam Bockarie, who was said to be engaged in the recruitment and training of rebels in Liberia. The Government of Liberia has denied these reports. On 22 March, the Government of Sierra Leone arrested 16 persons suspected of organizing a group of dissidents to invade Liberia. The arrests were carried out in the area of the Gola Forest, close to the Liberian border.

12. During consultations of the heads of State of the Mano River Union held at Bamako on 2 March, the President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, was requested to become personally involved in resolving the obstacles confronting the Sierra Leone peace process. Pursuant to that decision, President Taylor extended an invitation to Mr. Sankoh to visit Monrovia on 12 March for consultations on the peace process. However, Mr. Sankoh insisted that he would not travel until the Security Council lifted the travel ban imposed on him by its resolution 1171 (1998) of 5 June 1998.

13. On 18 March, in a welcome development a ministerial meeting of the Mano River Union member States was held at Monrovia. The meeting was followed up by a meeting of the Ministers responsible for Security, Internal Affairs, Defence and Justice in Freetown on 17 April. At that meeting, agreement was reached to set up a Joint Security Committee of the Mano River Union, which would include a technical committee to advise the Joint Security Committee and joint border security and confidence-building units. The recommendations were submitted for consideration by the Union at its summit meeting, which was held at Conakry on 8 May. At that meeting, which was also attended by President Konaré, the situation in Sierra Leone was also discussed (see para. 76 below).

III. Security situation before 1 May 2000

14. Prior to the serious attacks on United Nations peacekeepers, which erupted on 1 May 2000 and which are described in section VII below, the overall security situation had improved gradually as UNAMSIL troops stepped up their patrols and deployed to new locations in the provinces. However, in the areas still under the control of rebel groups, particularly the RUF and AFRC/ex-SLA strongholds, the security situation remained precarious and there were several serious incidents, some involving United Nations peacekeepers.

15. On 21 March, a serious violation of the ceasefire occurred in the Bafodia-Kabala area, where fighting erupted between elements of RUF and AFRC/ex-SLA. UNAMSIL deployed military observers and two platoons from the Kenyan battalion to the area to calm the situation. Intermittent fighting continued until 30 March when the AFRC/ex-SLA commander agreed to the UNAMSIL proposal to disarm. To avert tension, a total of 292 AFRC/ex-SLA combatants were disarmed on 30 March and transported to the Lungi disarmament, demobilization and reintegration camp together with their dependants. A further 139 were disarmed on 2 and 3 April and also transferred to that camp. Altogether, some 900 persons were moved. A company from the Kenyan battalion and a team of military observers were subsequently deployed at Kabala, but had to be moved back to Makeni to strengthen UNAMSIL positions there after the RUF attacks in early May. In another incident on 8 April, unidentified persons fired several rounds at Ghanaian UNAMSIL troops at Kenema. The troops returned fire and the attack ceased.

16. On 22 April, RUF staged a demonstration against the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme at Makeni, in which about 40 armed RUF

fighters participated. That group also set up a checkpoint close to the entrance of the reception centre of the Makeni disarmament, demobilization and reintegration camp. The RUF checkpoint was removed the same day under pressure from UNAMSIL. At that time, RUF fighters did not hinder the movement of UNAMSIL or personnel of the United Kingdom Department for International Development, which is providing the logistic support to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. However, RUF did harass local Sierra Leonean disarmament, demobilization and reintegration personnel and forced them to leave the camp.

17. Also on 22 April, a group of some 20 RUF fighters prevented UNAMSIL military observers from entering the premises of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration reception centre of Magburaka. They also alleged that UNAMSIL soldiers, who were providing security at that location, had taken some ammunition belonging to RUF. A small-scale scuffle ensued, after which UNAMSIL troops at the site decided to withdraw temporarily to avoid escalation. The Makeni/Magburaka area remained very tense and subsequently became the scene of the first attacks by RUF on UNAMSIL troops.

18. On 28 April, a scuffle between ECOMOG troops and ex-SLA members over a stolen vehicle led to several shots being fired, with one ex-SLA fighter killed and another seriously wounded. Several ex-SLA members immediately took to the streets to protest about this incident. The situation caused considerable tension in Freetown, but was brought under control by UNAMSIL. Mr. Koroma helped to restore calm. Mr. Sankoh, however, gave a press conference on 1 May during which he stated that UNAMSIL had shot the ex-combatants on 28 April in Freetown. This inciting statement led to an increase of tension between RUF and UNAMSIL throughout the country.

19. A serious incident occurred on 30 April, during which a soldier of the Nigerian contingent in UNAMSIL was shot and seriously wounded when he refused to surrender his weapon to a large group of armed men (presumably ex-SLA) in the Occra Hills area. His unit of five men was outnumbered and ultimately forced to surrender their weapons. The injured soldier was evacuated to Nigeria. A protest about the incident has been made to Mr. Koroma.

20. Other ceasefire violations during the reporting period included serious abuses against civilians in the Port Loko and Occra Hills areas, the maintenance of illegal roadblocks by all factions, and other obstruction of peacekeeping operations, particularly by RUF elements. Tension in the Occra Hills area subsided somewhat after the Government announced that AFRC/ex-SLA combatants would be able to join the restructured army, if they met certain criteria. Another contributing factor to the decrease in tension was the payment by the Government of transitional safety allowances to ex-combatants who had disarmed under the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

21. The Joint Monitoring Commission continued to hold its weekly meetings under the chairmanship of UNAMSIL to address ceasefire violations. The Commission continued to press the factions to comply with article XIX of the Lomé Peace Agreement which requires them to disclose the number and location of their combatants. While the Civil Defence Forces and AFRC/ex-SLA have furnished this information, RUF provided only partial information on 25 April. United Nations military observers convened several meetings of the district-level ceasefire monitoring committees in areas where UNAMSIL is deployed.

22. During the period under review, UNAMSIL contingents destroyed unstable ammunition found in various areas, as well as that collected during the disarmament process, the latter in close coordination with the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. Some damaged bridges in the Eastern Province have been replaced or repaired by UNAMSIL troops deployed in the area.

23. Since my last report, UNAMSIL troops have deployed to new areas, including the RUF stronghold of Kailahun, as well as to Zimmi, Joru, Kambia, Mange and Kabala (see the attached map). Although the deployment of UNAMSIL troops to Kono district was obstructed by RUF, military observers and a Kenyan platoon from Magburaka sent frequent patrols to Koidu. The deployment of UNAMSIL was subsequently adjusted in view of the RUF attacks. The strength of the military component of UNAMSIL as at 15 May had reached 9,251 military personnel, including 260 military observers (see annex).

24. In accordance with the understanding reached with the Government of Nigeria, two Nigerian

battalions and a tank company serving with ECOMOG were brought under United Nations command and deployed in Freetown for a 90-day period. On 2 May, the remaining ECOMOG troops in Sierra Leone were repatriated after handing over their security functions to UNAMSIL peacekeepers, in particular in Freetown.

IV. Progress towards major objectives in the peace process

25. In my last report (S/2000/186), I outlined a number of important objectives or "steps ahead" to help define priorities and the responsibilities of all concerned and to provide the international community with benchmarks by which to measure progress. These main steps were endorsed by the Security Council at its 4111th meeting. This section describes the progress made during the reporting period towards these objectives.

Early disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants

26. The disarmament and demobilization process, which was making slow but steady progress, came to a virtual standstill after hostilities erupted early in May. As at 15 May, a total of 24,042 ex-combatants had been disarmed: 4,949 from RUF; 10,055 from AFRC/ex-SLA; and 9,038 from the Civil Defence Forces. The total figure of ex-combatants includes 1,701 child combatants who surrendered without weapons. The number and quality of weapons surrendered remain an issue of concern. To date, 10,840 weapons have been surrendered.

27. Following the attacks by RUF on UNAMSIL and its movements in the direction of Freetown, many ex-Sierra Leone Army and Civil Defence Forces combatants have taken up arms and are likely to remain armed at least for as long as RUF continues its attacks. While these actions on the part of the ex-SLA and the Civil Defence Forces would be understandable in the present context, it is clear that this development, together with the destruction of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration facilities by RUF, could seriously complicate the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, which remains a crucial element of the peace process in Sierra Leone. There is also concern about the fate of those combatants, especially children, who had voluntarily joined the programme and would now be vulnerable to re-recruitment and possible punishment for desertion by RUF.

28. In view of the slow pace of disarmament, the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration held an emergency meeting on 7 April of all stakeholders in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, chaired by President Kabbah, and agreed on a fast-track approach to disarmament. This approach included the shortening of the period of encampment of disarmed combatants at the demobilization centres from the initial six to eight weeks to a period of three weeks, and the use of mobile disarmament teams. The process would take the same time for all the RUF, AFRC/ex-SLA and Civil Defence Forces combatants, and was expected to result in a quicker flow of ex-combatants through the programme.

29. At that meeting, the National Commission also decided that the disarmament of RUF combatants in the Kailahun District would start in the Eastern Province. As a result, on 10 April, representatives from UNAMSIL, ECOMOG, a group of Parliamentarians and the press accompanied Mr. Sankoh to a ceremonial start of this exercise in Segbwema. However, only 89 combatants, including 56 RUF, 28 ex-SLA and 5 Civil Defence Forces, reported for disarmament and were subsequently transported to the Daru demobilization centre.

30. On 17 April, the four disarmament, demobilization and reintegration camps at Bo, Moyamba, Makeni and Magburaka became operational. Civil Defence Forces combatants have since then disarmed at Bo and Moyamba. RUF, however, did not participate in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process at Makeni and Magburaka and the overall number of RUF combatants disarmed remained well below expectations.

31. At the same time, many ex-SLA soldiers as well as combatants from other factions were reluctant to disarm for fear that they would not get the chance to join the new army if they left the demobilization centres. To allay this fear, the Government clarified that all former combatants would be eligible to join Sierra Leone's restructured army, provided that candidates met the criteria of the Military Reintegration Plan.

32. Delays in the payment of allowances for the combatants encamped at the disarmament,

demobilization and reintegration centres caused some disturbances in the camps as well as demonstrations in Freetown. UNAMSIL took steps to reinforce security at the camps and, in conjunction with the National Commission, to expedite the registration and documentation process for timely preparation of demobilization activities and payment of allowances.

33. The delays in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme led to additional costs and therefore increased the need for financial assistance from donor countries. Before May, there was an important shortfall in contributions to the Multi-Donor Trust Fund, which is administered by the World Bank, of $19 million for the year 2000 disarmament, demobilization and reintegration budget. However, it is likely that a resumption in due course of the programme may require additional resources.

34. An additional concern arising in the context of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process was the lack of guidelines for the care and protection of so-called camp followers, or dependants of ex-combatants. UNAMSIL has initiated policy discussions and made recommendations on this issue, including the provision of adequate humanitarian assistance to this sector of the population, in cooperation with the Government and relevant humanitarian agencies.

Extension of State authority

35. During the period under review, the Government's Task Force for the restoration of civil authority throughout the country, which is chaired by Vice-President Joe Albert Demby, started discussions on plans and strategies for the return of Government officials and other public officials to the provinces, districts and chiefdoms.

36. In April, the Government of Sierra Leone decided to postpone the return of its officials to Makeni because of security concerns, as most parts of the Northern Province remain under RUF control. There was also a lack of basic amenities, including suitable residence and office accommodation.

National reconciliation and democratization

37. With a view to advancing democratization and national institution-building, UNAMSIL worked closely with the Attorney-General, the Minister of Justice and the High Commissioner for Human Rights in preparing draft legislation for the establishment of the national Human Rights Commission as foreseen in the Lomé Peace Agreement.

38. The National Electoral Commission was sworn into office on 20 March and has commenced work. The Government was also exploring the possibility of conducting phased local elections for Paramount Chiefs, beginning with rebel-free areas.

39. Obviously, the process of national reconciliation has become even more difficult in the light of the recent attacks by RUF, which have seriously undermined the peace process and have further exacerbated the lack of trust between the signatories of the Lomé Agreement.

Rebuilding Sierra Leone's security forces

40. There has been some improvement in the functioning of the Sierra Leone police force, which receives assistance from the United Kingdom and UNAMSIL. However, the restructuring process is proceeding slowly and is hampered by the lack of funding as well as the outbreak of hostilities. Changes have been made in the management structure, crime prevention methods, and rank structure of the police force. A Complaints and Discipline Department has been established to look into corrupt practices, criminal activities, sexual abuse and violent crimes by the police. UNAMSIL has also continued to regularly provide human rights training to the Sierra Leone police forces. Personnel of the armed Special Security Division of the Sierra Leonean police have now been deployed to Moyamba, Kenema, Bo and Lungi.

41. Efforts were also made to implement the Military Reintegration Plan, which was agreed upon by all parties. The first phase of the plan would involve an assessment of Sierra Leone Army officers to ensure that they, after fast-track training, could be involved in the training of their own army. I wish to express my appreciation for the crucial assistance provided by the United Kingdom in this regard.

42. Regrettably, a key figure in the national security system, General Mitikishe Maxwell Khobe, Chief of Defence Staff of the Sierra Leone Army, died on 18 April. The Government of Sierra Leone declared seven days of mourning.

V. Human rights

43. The human rights situation in some parts of the country, especially those areas not under the control of the Government, remained an issue of very serious concern. Abductions of civilians for specific tasks such as hard labour on palm oil plantations continued to be perpetrated by RUF and AFRC/ex-SLA elements from the Occra Hills area.

44. In the Northern Province, international non-governmental organizations seriously curtailed their humanitarian operations in RUF-held territories following the detention of some of their international and national aid workers by armed RUF combatants near Alikalia on 7 March. In Kabala, there were reports of the harassment of civilians and looting of villages by elements of the ex-SLA.

45. The large number of dependants of the AFRC/ex-SLA combatants who emerged from the bush at Kabala on 3 April (see para. 15 above) drew attention to the need to take special measures to protect dependants of ex-combatants, the majority of whom are women and children. The majority of "wives" of the combatants are in fact abductees and, if not interviewed separately from their "husbands", would most likely not feel free to express their wish to return to their original families.

46. The protection of internally displaced persons remains a source of concern, which needs to be urgently addressed in a coordinated manner. In the Port Loko area, internally displaced persons who move beyond the confines of relatively safe areas to meet their daily needs often become victims of abduction, rape and forced labour.

47. The deployment of United Nations human rights monitors to key locations in the country had to be curtailed as a result of the recent hostilities. However, their deployment will proceed as a matter of priority as soon as security conditions allow.

48. Recent reports of serious human rights abuses, summary executions and violations of international humanitarian law, committed during the recent fighting by RUF as well as by the Sierra Leone Army and AFRC/ex-SLA, are a cause of grave concern. I call on all parties and their leadership to refrain from such acts and restore respect for the rule of law.

Child protection

49. Preliminary reports suggest that child combatants have been used extensively during the current conflict. UNAMSIL human rights officers who undertook a mission to Masiaka on 15 May observed several armed child combatants, mostly boys, with the Civil Defence Forces, AFRC/ex-SLA and the Sierra Leone Army. About 25 per cent of the combatants were under 18 years and some freely admitted that their ages were between 7 and 14 years. Almost all of them were armed. Other reports indicate that RUF is using a similar proportion of child combatants in the front lines.

50. Prior to the events of May, a total of about 1,700 child combatants, out of an estimated 5,000, had entered the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. UNICEF estimates that, at the time of the current crisis, about 800 of the demobilized child soldiers had been reunified with their families or placed in foster care, or had run away, leaving about 900 in interim care centres. These children remain vulnerable to re-abduction as a result of the collapse of the programme. Further, there have been no more releases of children from their commanders since the start of the crisis. UNICEF and its implementing partners, with significant support from key donors, are working to ensure that adequate protections are in place for these children.

51. Obviously, the delay in the disarmament process and the renewed hostilities also impacted negatively on the release of abducted children and women. The Government of Sierra Leone has agreed to establish a National Commission for War-Affected Children to ensure that children's concerns are addressed at the highest political levels. This agreement was reached during the recent visit to Freetown, on 29 and 30 April, of my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Olara Otunnu, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada, Lloyd Axworthy. Mr. Otunnu and Mr. Axworthy also held separate meetings with President Kabbah, Mr. Koroma and Mr. Sankoh to stress the need for special measures to address the plight of the war-affected children of Sierra Leone and to assess progress in implementation of the Lomé Agreement.

VI. Humanitarian aspects

52. During the reporting period, humanitarian access gradually improved in some areas owing to the wider deployment of UNAMSIL and the subsequent improvement of security conditions. Rehabilitation and reintegration activities continued to operate without serious difficulties in the relatively stable Southern Province. However, during the attacks on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration centres in the first week of May, international humanitarian staff were surrounded and harassed by rebel elements in Makeni. All staff were able to leave the area, but several assets belonging to humanitarian organizations were looted. The drastic deterioration of the security situation in May forced the curtailing of humanitarian operations in this and other areas of the Northern and Eastern Provinces, reversing gains made in the past few months. Food, health, water, sanitation and child protection programmes continue in Freetown and accessible areas of the Southern and lower Eastern Provinces, such as Bo, Kenema, Pujehun and Bonthe, despite limited staffing because of a drawdown in international humanitarian staff.

53. About 20,000 new internally displaced persons moved into Freetown following the fighting outside the peninsula. However, in view of improving security conditions, many of them are now returning to their homes in the Waterloo area, where they will receive assistance. Additionally, plans are under way to provide assistance to about 9,000 new internally displaced persons at Lungi. The World Food Programme, in collaboration with the Government, will also continue food distributions to about 59,000 internally displaced persons who were already in Freetown before the start of the current crisis. Further internal displacements have been reported in areas that cannot yet be reached, particularly around Masiaka and Port Loko. Meanwhile, the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees is providing assistance to more than 1,000 new refugees who have arrived in Guinea, which already hosts about 450,000 Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees.

54. Another area of concern is the apparently high rate of HIV/AIDS infection in Sierra Leone. Preliminary data suggest that the incidence of HIV/AIDS in Sierra Leone is increasing exponentially, indicating that the country is in the early stages of a major HIV/AIDS outbreak. The Government and their United Nations and non-governmental organization partners continue to support HIV testing, counselling and programmes for the control of sexually transmitted diseases, but much remains to be done in the areas of sexual education and health programmes. UNAMSIL has taken measures to sensitize its personnel to the risks of infection.

55. In order to cope with the current emergency, United Nations agencies have been forced to divert resources, such as food support for agricultural programmes, from activities designed to ensure the nation's long-term recovery. Further, the recent events have had a grave impact on the ability of humanitarian agencies to meet the needs of large segments of the population. Should these conditions persist, humanitarian priorities and needs will have to be re-evaluated and prioritized to reflect a new operating environment. To that end, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in cooperation with the agencies, is currently in the process of updating the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal to reflect the current situation. The Appeal, which requests $71 million in humanitarian assistance, is at present only about 37 per cent funded. However, a more robust response is required to meet the urgent humanitarian and rehabilitation needs of the country.

VII. Attacks on and detention of United Nations personnel

Military developments

56. The present crisis commenced on 1 May, when RUF ex-combatants approached the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration reception centre at Makeni in a threatening manner and started firing in the air. It should be noted that the RUF commander in Makeni obstructed the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in that area ever since the camps there, which were constructed to meet the RUF demands for better facilities, had become operational on 17 April. Only 10 RUF ex-combatants voluntarily came forward to disarm. They were demobilized in the morning of 1 May at the Makeni reception centre. There have also been incidents at various locations of RUF forcibly preventing its fighters from disarming. At the same time, UNAMSIL was about to deploy its forces to the area of Koidu, which is the centre of diamond mining operations conducted by RUF. This

planned deployment may also have contributed to the decision of RUF to attack UNAMSIL in a possible test of its resolve.

57. On 1 May, the local RUF commander and some of his fighters approached the reception centre at Makeni, which was manned by UNAMSIL military observers, in an assertive manner and demanded that the United Nations hand over five of the disarmed ex-combatants with their weapons as well as the UNAMSIL military observer who had demobilized them. The likely motive of RUF was to punish those ex-combatants for joining the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. However, UNAMSIL prevented the RUF combatants from entering the UNAMSIL facilities and tried to discuss the situation with them. In the course of these discussions, the RUF combatants detained three UNAMSIL military observers as well as four UNAMSIL peacekeepers of the Kenyan battalion who were providing security at that location. The RUF combatants then proceeded to destroy part of the camp at Makeni and also started looting in the town. At Magburaka, a group of armed RUF ex-combatants surrounded the UNAMSIL team site, which was protected by a section of the Kenyan battalion.

58. In response to this incident, the Force Commander met the same day with President Kabbah to express his deep concern and discuss possible measures. The Force Commander also spoke with Mr. Sankoh by telephone to demand the immediate release of all UNAMSIL personnel. The RUF leader did not offer any help and accused UNAMSIL of trying to start a war by forcibly disarming RUF ex-combatants. President Kabbah then requested Mr. Lamin, the RUF-designated Minister for Trade and Industry, to try to convince Mr. Sankoh to give orders to defuse the situation. According to Mr. Lamin, this was agreed to by Mr. Sankoh, who, however, remained unavailable to UNAMSIL during the rest of that day.

59. On 2 May, which date coincided with the departure of the last ECOMOG troops from the country, the situation at Magburaka deteriorated sharply when RUF tried to disarm UNAMSIL troops. The United Nations troops resisted and an exchange of fire ensued which continued throughout the day. RUF used small arms, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars. Three soldiers of the Kenyan battalion were injured as a result of the fighting. RUF also destroyed and looted the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration facilities at Magburaka and Makeni. At Makeni, RUF attacked UNAMSIL troops, who returned fire. Two soldiers of the Kenyan battalion were wounded at that location. RUF also attacked and overran a 60-man strong unit of the Kenyan battalion located at the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration camp in Makeni. On 3 May, fighting in Makeni and Magburaka stopped, with the exception of some sporadic firing. A large group of the Kenyan unit, which had not been heard from since the attack at the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration camp, arrived at Mile 91 on 4 May after walking from Makeni, carrying three wounded. Smaller groups of this unit managed to join their company headquarters at Makeni.

60. The events at Makeni and Magburaka had immediate repercussions in other areas under RUF control where UNAMSIL had deployed its troops. On 2 May, a UNAMSIL helicopter and its crew and passengers were detained by RUF combatants at Kailahun. There were four crew members and two civilian staff members of UNAMSIL. In addition, RUF set up a roadblock to restrict UNAMSIL traffic in that area and detained 30 UNAMSIL military and civilian personnel and a helicopter. A 23-man unit of the Indian battalion, which was deployed from Daru to join the company deployed at Kailahun, was intercepted and detained by RUF at Kuiva, near Kailahun.

61. Also, late in the evening of 3 May, a company of the Nigerian contingent in Kambia came under fire from RUF. That company was then briefly detained by RUF and released on 4 May without their weapons and uniforms. A platoon of the Nigerian contingent at Mange also came under fire and was surrounded by RUF.

62. The Force Commander, Major General Vijay Kumar Jetley, took immediate measures to reinforce the UNAMSIL positions at Makeni and Magburaka. The company of the Kenyan battalion which had been deployed at Kabala moved to Makeni, while a 100-man unit of the Indian quick reaction company reinforced Magburaka. The Zambian battalion was then instructed to move from Lungi to Makeni, but was stopped at a strong roadblock erected by RUF, presumably ambushed and detained by a large group of RUF fighters. Some 400 United Nations troops, as well as elements of the Kenyan sector headquarters which accompanied them, are believed to have fallen into the hands of RUF, which reportedly moved 200 of them to

its stronghold in the Kono district. At that time, the Force Commander also began to redeploy United Nations troops to consolidate the UNAMSIL presence around Freetown as well as at Port Loko and Masiaka. The UNAMSIL units at the latter location were later forced to withdraw for lack of ammunition.

63. From 2 May onwards, there were several clashes between RUF and UNAMSIL troops, as well as elements of the Sierra Leone Army and the Civil Defence Forces at several locations in the northern and western parts of the country, including Makeni, Magburaka, Lunsar, Rogberi Junction, Port Loko, Mile 91, Masiaka, Songo, Mange and Kambia. At times, the Government-operated helicopter gunship engaged the rebel forces. During this period of fighting, UNAMSIL experienced serious difficulties in obtaining accurate information about the situation on the ground, which were exacerbated by a continuous stream of unconfirmed rumours and reports from the field. There were also unconfirmed reports about movements of RUF fighters from neighbouring countries into Sierra Leone. UNAMSL was forced to conduct frequent aerial reconnaissance missions to gather information about the movements of hostile RUF elements.

64. On 9 May, the Indian quick reaction company and a Kenyan company, which had been surrounded at Magburaka, broke successfully through RUF lines and managed to reach United Nations positions at Mile 91. On the same day, the remaining troops of the Kenyan battalion broke out of Makeni and managed to reach areas controlled by the ex-SLA at Kabala and Bumbuna. Before their breakout, these units stood their ground and did not surrender in spite of continuing threats and attacks by RUF, which had encircled their positions. I wish to convey to the United Nations troops concerned my admiration for this display of military courage and determination.

65. It should also be noted that, although RUF elements at Kailahun have surrounded and detained United Nations peacekeepers, they have so far refrained from hostilities against UNAMSIL and have reportedly been under considerable pressure from the local population to release United Nations personnel.

66. On 14 May, 18 detainees were moved from Geima, where they were being held by RUF, to the compound of the Indian battalion at Kailahun. This group includes 11 military observers and seven members of the Indian battalion. Although their location is surrounded by RUF, the former detainees are considered to be safe and under the protection of the Indian battalion, which did not yield to RUF. Negations continue with the RUF leadership to obtain their agreement to airlift the 11 military observers to Freetown.

67. On 15 May, 139 detainees, all members of the Zambian battalion, were moved to the Liberian border town of Foya, and 15 of them were transported onwards to Monrovia. Their release was the result of the commendable personal involvement of President Taylor of Liberia, whose efforts are to be commended by the international community. UNAMSIL is currently making arrangements to airlift the released detainees from Foya to Freetown with a stopover in Monrovia.

68. As at 15 May, the total number of UNAMSIL personnel presumed to be in the hands of RUF stands at 352, comprising 297 soldiers of the Zambian battalion, 29 soldiers of the Kenyan battalion, 23 soldiers of the Indian battalion and 3 military observers. They are believed to be held in Kuiva (near Kailahun) and in the Kono district. As a result of the fighting, a total of 25 UNAMSIL soldiers have been wounded. Fifteen United Nations soldiers remain missing, and it is feared that some of them may have lost their lives. RUF casualties are unknown, although reports indicate that RUF may have suffered a relatively high number of casualties.

69. At the time of preparation of this report, the situation in and around Freetown appeared to have stabilized, with no significant RUF movements reported towards the capital. The Government has mobilized forces which support it, including the Sierra Leone Army and Civil Defence Forces, to defend Freetown. A pivotal factor in restoring stability was the arrival of United Kingdom troops on 7 May and of a substantial British naval presence offshore a week later. The deployment of British troops at Lungi airport and in the western part of Freetown had as its objective the safe evacuation of nationals of the United Kingdom and others for whom it was responsible. Nevertheless, this presence boosted the confidence of the Sierra Leoneans, and enabled UNAMSIL to redeploy much-needed troops to areas east of Freetown. It is hoped that the United Kingdom will be able to maintain a military presence in the country until UNAMSIL has received the necessary reinforcements. An additional stabilizing factor was the arrival on 12 May of 300 well-trained and well-equipped troops from Jordan to

reinforce its contingent in UNAMSIL. The Government of India too made additional troops available for UNAMSIL, which will be airlifted soon. I applaud these countries for their immediate and resolute decisions to strengthen the international community's presence in Sierra Leone and their continued support since the beginning of the crisis.

70. As these events were unfolding, UNAMSIL received strong indications that Mr. Sankoh had given no instructions to his troops to stop the fighting or to seek the release of the detainees. On the contrary, Mr. Sankoh appeared initially to encourage his troops to take an assertive stand vis-à-vis the United Nations and later, when hostility against him increased in Freetown, called on his troops to march on Freetown.

71. On 9 May, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations arrived in Freetown as my special envoy to boost the morale of UNAMSIL and to consult with my Special Representative and the Force Commander on their assessment of the situation and to prepare recommendations for the United Nations response.

Diplomatic and political efforts

72. Immediately following the outbreak of hostilities, I contacted leaders in the region and subregion to seek their assistance in bringing the situation to a rapid and peaceful resolution. I am grateful for the strong efforts made in this regard by African leaders, in particular the President of Algeria, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, current chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, the President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, the Leader of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Colonel Muammar Al-Qadhafi, the President of Mali, Alpha Oumar Konare, the President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, and the President of Togo, Gnassingbe Eyadema. Representatives of several Governments have been in touch with Mr. Sankoh to secure the immediate release of the detainees and to find ways to salvage the peace process in Sierra Leone. I am grateful for their efforts and, in particular, to the heads of State of Liberia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mali and Nigeria, who sent their personal envoys to meet with Mr. Sankoh in the period from 3 to 7 May.

73. On 5 and 6 May, my Special Representative met in Freetown with Mr. Sankoh, who accused UNAMSIL troops of having precipitated the crisis by forcing RUF combatants to disarm. The Special Representative responded that no UNAMSIL troops had ever attempted to disarm RUF combatants by force and that, in fact, RUF combatants had in subsequent days escalated events by attacking UNAMSIL; and demanded the immediate release of all detained UNAMSIL troops and their weapons and equipment. In the evening of 6 May, the Special Representative and the Libyan Special Envoy, Ali Treiki, met jointly with Mr. Sankoh. They pressed him to reduce the tension by ordering the immediate release of the detainees and to issue a statement that RUF would cease its attacks. Mr. Sankoh agreed to issue a statement to that effect, which was read out that evening on national television by the Special Representative. Mr. Adeniji and Mr. Treiki also spoke to President Kabbah and urged him to reduce tension and, in particular, to call on the organizers of the planned demonstration on 8 May to avoid approaching Mr. Sankoh's house.

74. However, on 8 May, an estimated crowd of 30,000 went to Mr. Sankoh's house to protest against the RUF attacks on UNAMSIL. When the crowd tried to approach the house, armed members of RUF fired into the crowd from Mr. Sankoh's residence and killed several people and injured dozens more. The UNAMSIL troops stationed at Mr. Sankoh's home were overwhelmed by the huge crowd. In the panic and confusion, Foday Sankoh disappeared with some of his body guards. Several members of RUF were shot and killed by armed elements within the crowd; the house was ransacked and looted. The whereabouts of Foday Sankoh remained unknown until 17 May, when he was apprehended as he returned to his residence by elements of AFRC/ex-SLA who turned him over to the custody of the Government.

75. In the same period, Mr. Koroma, the Chairman of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace and leader of AFRC/ex-SLA, made several public statements in which he urged his followers and other to take up arms and defend Freetown. Armed elements of the Sierra Leone Army, ex-SLA and the Civil Defence Forces started patrolling the town and arresting members of RUF, actions which contributed to an increase in tension in Freetown and beyond.

76. On 8 May, at the summit meeting of the Mano River Union held at Conakry, the Presidents of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone were joined by President Konaré of Mali as Chairman of ECOWAS and my Special Representative in Sierra Leone in a special

discussion on Sierra Leone. The summit condemned the attacks on and detention of United Nations personnel and mandated President Taylor to involve himself personally to ensure the release of the detainees and the resumption of the peace process.

77. On 9 May, a summit meeting of the ECOWAS Committee on Sierra Leone, consisting of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria and Togo, met at Abuja. The meeting strongly condemned RUF and called for the immediate and unconditional release of the detainees. In this regard, the meeting approved the mandate given to President Taylor (see para. 76). The summit also warned the leadership of RUF that their amnesty under the Lomé Peace Agreement could be revoked and that they could be tried for war crimes if they continued to flout the Lomé Peace Agreement. Participants reaffirmed their total support for the peace process in Sierra Leone as set out in the Lomé Peace Agreement, which remains the most appropriate framework for the resolution of the conflict. They also expressed their determination to use all means at their disposal, including the military option, to foil any attempt to take over power through the use of force, and to defend democratic institutions in Sierra Leone. The ECOWAS Executive Secretary was directed to convene a meeting of Ministers of Defence and Chiefs of Staff on 17 May at Abuja to consider, in the event of new involvement of ECOMOG in Sierra Leone, the practical modalities of such involvement.

78. A meeting of the Joint Implementation Committee was held at Freetown on 13 May, chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali and attended by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia and representatives of Ghana, Guinea, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Sierra Leone, as well as of Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, OAU and UNAMSIL. Mr. Koroma also attended the meeting; RUF was not represented. The meeting agreed that a dual approach should be pursued to resolve the current crisis, namely, exerting strong diplomatic pressure on RUF and displaying military strength by enhancing the operational capabilities of UNAMSIL to enable it to perform its functions more efficiently.

79. As at 15 May, there have been few indications that the leaders of RUF are willing to change their course of action, although some individual members of RUF have conveyed their willingness to disarm. At the same time, RUF continued to detain hundreds of UNAMSIL personnel and also to attack UNAMSIL and Sierra Leonean troops at various locations in the country. It would therefore be important to continue to bring strong pressure to bear on the RUF leadership.

VIII. Recommendations for immediate measures

80. I very much welcome the efforts made at the subregional, regional and international levels to express the international community's condemnation of the attacks perpetrated by RUF and to seek the immediate release of the peacekeepers detained by RUF, which remains the Organization's highest priority. At the same time, it would be important that political pressure be supported by a strong military posture, including on the part of the United Nations, to deter RUF from pursuing the military option.

81. To this end, UNAMSIL should be reinforced immediately to enhance its capability to defend its positions at Lungi airport, on the Freetown peninsula and at other strategic locations in the western and southern parts of the country. This immediate reinforcement, which is currently under way, would bring the military strength of UNAMSIL from its present strength of 9,250 to a level of up to 13,000, including 260 military observers. Once this key objective has been attained, UNAMSIL should be further expanded, which would enable it to gradually increase its presence, with sufficient military strength, and to stabilize the situation in Sierra Leone.

82. From the beginning of the crisis, the Secretariat has been working closely with those Member States that had agreed to contribute military units to UNAMSIL, in order to expedite the preparations for their deployment. With airlift support provided by the Governments of Canada, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation and the United States and with financial support provided by the Government of Germany, it is expected that up to 3,600 additional military personnel will arrive by the end of May or early June. It is also envisaged that the fourth Nigerian UNAMSIL battalion, which was due to be repatriated by the end of May, would be retained.

83. As I stressed in my previous reports on UNAMSIL, the troop strength authorized under Security Council resolution 1289 (2000) was predicated on the cooperation of the parties and a

generally permissive environment. Clearly, this crucial condition for any progress towards the Mission's key objective of assisting the parties in the implementation of the Lomé Agreement is now lacking. All efforts should therefore be aimed at the restoration of conditions conducive to a resumption of the peace process. The first priority in this regard is the consolidation of UNAMSIL units, both those currently on the ground and those scheduled to arrive shortly, at strong positions at Lungi airport, on the Freetown peninsula, and at other strategic locations on the main access roads to the capital. The main objective of this consolidation is to ensure the protection of the civilian population in Freetown and the security of Government institutions, as well as maintaining a sufficient strength in the areas under Government control to deter and, if necessary, repel further attacks by RUF.

84. Once these initial objectives have been attained, UNAMSIL will then seek to stabilize the situation in the country and assist the Government to restore law and order in the areas outside the control of RUF. To this end, UNAMSIL would be further strengthened and would begin to gradually deploy forward. It would do so in strength and with adequate equipment, in order to secure strategic locations in the western and southern parts of the country, including Port Loko, Rogberi Junction, Masiaka, Mile 91, Moyamba, Kenema and Daru. Such a deployment would make a significant contribution to the restoration of a measure of normalcy in the areas outside RUF control, the resumption of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, and the extension of Government authority to the provinces. This deployment would also allow the Government of Sierra Leone and the international community to reassess the necessary steps that will be required to promote a durable peace in Sierra Leone.

85. In determining the military strength needed to reach these objectives, it should be borne in mind that RUF elements may continue to employ guerrilla tactics. As the recent history of Sierra Leone has shown, the topography of the country lends itself well to such a modus operandi, especially during the rainy season. To counter the threat posed by RUF and to attain the objectives described above, it would therefore be necessary to deploy with due care and preparation, in sufficient numbers and backed up by adequate military means to deter attacks and, if necessary, respond decisively to any hostile action or intent.

86. However, after receiving the reinforcements currently under way, UNAMSIL would not have the necessary resources to fulfil its mandate in the present hostile environment in Sierra Leone and would need additional troops as well as the necessary force multipliers to do this. In this context, it is estimated that UNAMSIL would require, in addition to the immediate reinforcements described above, two infantry battalions (a mechanized battalion and one air transportable battalion for rapid reinforcement), a logistic battalion, a light artillery unit, additional air transportation assets and armed helicopters, and a maritime unit of six armed patrol boats, as well as the necessary medical, communications, intelligence and command personnel. The total military strength of an expanded UNAMSIL would be up to 16,500 military personnel, including 260 military observers.

87. It is envisaged that this force would comprise a total of 15 infantry battalions, which would tentatively be deployed to the following areas: the Freetown peninsula; Lungi airport and peninsula; Port Loko, Rogberi Junction and Lunsar; Masiaka, Moyamba and Mile 91; Bo, Kenema and Daru. UNAMSIL would also maintain a sizeable force reserve, which would provide it with the capacity to react rapidly to serious military threats throughout the country. It is understood that the deployment of troops and their modus operandi would need to be revised in the light of the situation on the ground and the time of arrival of the additional troops.

88. The envisaged expansion of the force up to a level of 16,500 military personnel would also require a commensurate increase in the civilian administrative and logistical support staff of the Mission. The financial implications of the envisaged increase in strength will be submitted to the Security Council in an addendum to the present report.

89. For the time being, I believe that the mandate entrusted to UNAMSIL under resolution 1289 (2000) provides the force with sufficient authority to conduct the necessary operations in support of the aims described above. In that resolution, the Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, authorized UNAMSIL, within its capabilities and areas of deployment and in the light of conditions on the ground, to take the necessary action to (a) provide security at key locations and Government buildings, in

particular in Freetown, important intersections and major airports, including Lungi airport; (b) facilitate the free flow of people, goods and humanitarian assistance along specified thoroughfares; (c) provide security in and at all sites of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme; (d) coordinate with and assist, in common areas of deployment, the Sierra Leone law enforcement authorities in the discharge of their responsibilities; (e) guard weapons, ammunition and other military equipment collected from ex-combatants and assist in their subsequent disposal or destruction. In that resolution, the Security Council also authorized UNAMSIL to take the necessary action, in the discharge of its mandate, to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel and, within its capabilities and areas of deployment, to afford protection to civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, taking into account the responsibilities of the Government of Sierra Leone. On the basis of that mandate, the present robust rules of engagement of UNAMSIL enable it to use force, including deadly force, in self-defence against any hostile act or intent. In the present circumstances, it is obvious that the use of force against all elements that continue to display a hostile intent towards the United Nations would be warranted and justified. At the same time, UNAMSIL would be ready to enter into discussion with all those who would be willing and ready to pursue a peaceful solution.

90. To ensure proper control and unity of command, I believe that all international forces in Sierra Leone, with the exception of those sent for a brief period for strictly national purposes, should be integrated into UNAMSIL. It is also of the utmost importance that the United Nations forces coordinate closely with the Sierra Leonean Army and other elements allied with the Government, in particular the Civil Defence Forces and AFRC/ex-SLA, to avoid any misunderstandings which could lead to incidents. To this end, it is envisaged that UNAMSIL will place military liaison officers with the military command of the groups and units involved. UNAMSIL would also ensure close coordination with the British force while it remains in Sierra Leone.

Public information

91. As was noted in my third report, it would be necessary for UNAMSIL to set up a countrywide public information campaign. In that connection, the Department of Public Information conducted an assessment, from 13 to 20 March 2000, of public information needs. On the basis of the team's recommendations, efforts are currently under way to significantly increase the capacity of the UNAMSIL public information office as a matter of priority.

92. It is clear that UNAMSIL will face a significant challenge in disseminating information on the peace process in a country where the infrastructure has been damaged by years of warfare. In order to reach all parts of the country, UNAMSIL intends to set up its own radio station. The necessary equipment, donated to the United Nations in 1998 by the Government of Denmark, has been transferred to UNAMSIL. Radio UNAMSIL is expected to play a significant role in the Mission's efforts to inform the people of Sierra Leone, independent of any party or affiliation. The UNAMSIL public information office would also include units for liaison with the media, video and print production and community outreach.

IX. Observations

93. The overall situation in Sierra Leone remains tense and critical. The deliberate and unprovoked attacks by RUF fighters on United Nations peacekeepers and the detention of large numbers of United Nations personnel are unacceptable acts which have been unequivocally condemned by the international community. Given the suffering the country has endured during the past decade, it would be unforgivable to thwart the hopes of the Sierra Leonean people who had just begun to see some modest improvement in their situation. The international community should not allow any group, and in particular the RUF leadership, to deny to the people of Sierra Leone their legitimate aspirations to live in peace and rebuild their country.

94. Of immediate concern is the safe return of all those United Nations personnel currently being detained by RUF, an end to the hostile acts of the RUF fighters, and their full cooperation in retrieving the dead, wounded and missing. In this regard, I should like to acknowledge the efforts made by regional leaders, including President Taylor of Liberia, whose personal involvement led to the release of a significant number of detainees. However, I demand that the leadership of the RUF take urgent steps to ensure that

all remaining United Nations personnel in their hands be released immediately and unconditionally. I also call upon those with influence on RUF to continue to work towards this end. In addition, the Security Council may also wish to consider a strengthening of the sanctions regime, including measures which would prevent RUF commanders from reaping the benefits of their illegal exploitation of mineral resources, in particular diamonds.

95. While part of the responsibility for some of the recent events may lie with local commanders of RUF, it is clear that Mr. Sankoh has failed to take any action to prevent, curb or stop the actions of his troops. On the contrary, there is some evidence that he may well have encouraged, if not planned, some of these acts. The international community should hold Mr. Sankoh accountable for his actions and those of RUF, and for the safety and well-being of all those who have been detained.

96. At the same time, the international community should not lose sight of the overarching objective of helping the people and Government of Sierra Leone to establish a durable peace in their country and rekindling their hope. Their plight has become a crucial test of the solidarity of the international community, rising above race and geography, which is a basic guiding principle of this Organization. The United Nations has not abandoned and will not abandon Sierra Leone. It should continue to provide humanitarian aid and the required assistance in taking the many steps needed on the path to peace, national reconciliation and development.

97. In this regard, I believe that active political efforts to assist the people of Sierra Leone to change the course of events in their country must, in the present circumstances, be supplemented by credible military force. At the outset of the crisis, I called upon those Member States with the capacity to deploy well-trained and well-equipped troops to constitute a rapid reaction force to provide UNAMSIL with the necessary deterrent capacity. In this regard, I very much welcome the decision made by the United Kingdom to deploy a spearhead battalion and other assets which, although sent for national reasons, was instrumental in restoring calm in Freetown and helping UNAMSIL by ensuring the defence of Lungi airport.

98. I also deeply appreciate the commendable efforts made by troop contributors, other Member States, and United Nations logistical personnel to accelerate the arrival of the troops which had already been committed to serve with UNAMSIL, as well as the arrival of additional units made available by Member States. This will enhance the capability of UNAMSIL to defend the Freetown peninsula, Lungi airport and other strategic locations on the main access roads to the capital.

99. However, in the present circumstances this will not be enough to create conditions which would be conducive to the establishment of a lasting peace. I therefore recommend an increase of the Force's strength up to a level of 16,500 military personnel, as outlined in paragraphs 80 to 90 above, for the purpose of stabilizing the situation in Sierra Leone under the present mandate of UNAMSIL. Once these additional forces have arrived in Sierra Leone and countered the threat posed by RUF to the peace process, it would be appropriate to consider additional steps which I will present to the Security Council after a thorough assessment of the political and military situation in Sierra Leone. Such steps may involve a strengthening of UNAMSIL, above the proposed strength of 16,500, which could be necessary to establish the security conditions throughout the country required for the successful implementation of aspects of the peace process, including disarmament and the holding of democratic elections.

100. At the 4139th meeting of the Security Council on 11 May 2000, many Member States advocated that UNAMSIL should be given a strong peace-enforcement mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter. As I indicated in my statement at that meeting, I am not opposed to such a mandate in principle, as long as the United Nations is able to obtain, from Member States with ready capacity, the necessary resources to carry out the tasks that such a mandate implies. In addition, it would be essential for the international community to demonstrate the necessary will and resolve to sustain such a commitment to impose peace in Sierra Leone. If such conditions cannot be met, any effort to strengthen the mandate of UNAMSIL would unduly raise expectations, increase the risk of loss of life, and undermine the credibility of the Organization.

101. Some West African Governments have, in principle, offered to make troops available in an effort to restore peace in their region. I naturally welcome these offers. They have however indicated that their offers would be contingent on strong financial and logistical support from other Member States.

102. Looking ahead, it is clear that the Government of Sierra Leone, other parties to the Lomé Agreement and the international community will need to reflect on the future of the peace process. The recent events raise serious questions about the role of RUF and of Foday Sankoh in particular. ECOWAS, during its meeting of 9 May 2000, reaffirmed its support for the peace process in Sierra Leone as set out in the Lomé Peace Agreement, which remains the most appropriate framework for the resolution of the conflict. I too believe that the Lomé Agreement contains many elements which contribute to a durable peace, in particular the disarmament of all factions, national reconciliation, the holding of democratic elections, and the creation of an effective national army and police force. In this regard, I call upon the leaders of those factions fighting on the side of the Government to exercise restraint, to respect the rule of law, and to refrain from any acts of harassment or revenge against RUF members of sympathizers, which could complicate efforts at reconciliation and restoring confidence. At all times, there should be full respect for the rule of law and human rights.

103. The process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, which is the cornerstone of the peace process, has come to a virtual standstill. Many of the ex-combatants belonging to AFRC/ex-SLA and the Civil Defence Forces have taken up arms again in defence of their country, which will seriously complicate their disarmament. Obviously, this aspect of the peace process requires a re-evaluation of its assumptions, organization and implementation mechanisms, which is to be undertaken in full coordination with national and international stakeholders.

104. Ultimately, a lasting resolution of the crisis can only be found through political means; it cannot be imposed by military force alone. Nor can a solution be the result of international involvement alone. The Government of Sierra Leone has a particular responsibility to actively design and implement the necessary steps towards peace in consultation with its regional and international partners. Of special importance in this regard would be the continuation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, together with the restructuring of Sierra Leone's armed forces. As I have stated in previous reports, the assistance of the international community to Sierra Leone cannot be open-ended and the Government should do its utmost to ensure that it can maintain a stable democracy and guarantee the security of its territory and institutions.

105. Looking back on recent events, it is obvious that the United Nations will have to draw lessons from its experiences in Sierra Leone. The force, which had been designed, equipped and deployed as a peacekeeping force, was quickly forced into actual combat with one of the parties that had pledged to cooperate with it. In the course of these events, many problems emerged within the Mission, including with regard to command and control, cohesiveness of the force, the flow of information, equipment and preparedness of troops, and coordination between and within the various components in UNAMSIL. In this respect, the Secretariat is taking urgent steps to assess these problems and to address recognized equipment shortfalls, in close coordination with the troop-contributing countries. This is no reflection on the leadership of the Mission. My Special Representative has handled a very difficult situation effectively. I also wish to acknowledge the Force Commander's quick reaction, personal courage and military professionalism. Nor does this imply criticism of the troops on the ground, many of which displayed considerable courage and professionalism in defending themselves and their mandate. At the same time, I am deeply saddened by the casualties inflicted on UNAMSIL troops, who had come to assist a peace process, but were attacked and forced to engage in combat to defend themselves in a situation that resembles war. I pay tribute to those who have died or were injured while performing their duties to serve the cause of peace in Sierra Leone.

106. In our focus on Sierra Leone, it would be important not to lose sight of the regional dimensions of the peace process, in particular in respect of the neighbouring countries, Guinea and Liberia. In this regard, I very much welcome the efforts taken by the States Members of the Mano River Union to enhance their cooperation. I should also like to encourage further efforts by ECOWAS and regional leaders to bring their influence to bear on the parties to the Lomé Agreement, in particular the Revolutionary United Front, and convince them that a durable peace in Sierra Leone requires their full cooperation and respect for the provisions of the Lomé Agreement.

107. I should like to express my gratitude to all Member States contributing troops, military observers,

civilian police or other assistance to UNAMSIL for their unwavering support, resolve and commitment in the face of a very difficult situation. Their willingness to stay the course and to strengthen UNAMSIL, despite the adverse conditions on the ground, are an example to the international community. At no point during the crisis did the city and population of Freetown suffer casualties and destruction, which was not the case in January 1999. United Nations contingents have stood firm throughout in defence of the capital.

108. I should also like to express gratitude for the invaluable role played by ECOWAS and, in particular, by ECOMOG, which has now left the country after years of sacrifice and service to the people and Government of Sierra Leone. I pay tribute to the brave men and women in ECOMOG and their Governments for their defence of a democratically elected Government. Troops from ECOWAS continue, of course, to play an essential role as part of UNAMSIL.

109. I also take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to my Special Representative, Oluyemi Adeniji, the UNAMSIL Force Commander, Major General Vijay Kumar Jetley, and the military and civilian personnel of UNAMSIL, as well as of United Nations programmes and agencies, the World Bank and other institutions working in the country, for their perseverance, courage and dedication in their work to fashion a better future for the people of Sierra Leone.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone: contributions as at 19 May 2000

	Military observers	*Staff Officers*	*Troops*	*Total*
Bangladesh	12			12
Bolivia	4			4
Canada	5			5
China	6			6
Croatia	10			10
Czech Republic	5			5
Denmark	2			2
Egypt	10			10
France	3			3
Gambia	26			26
Ghana	4	3	776	783
Guinea	12	3	776	791
India	14	18	1 644	1 676
Indonesia	10			10
Jordan	5		1 131	1 136
Kenya	11	13	858	882
Kyrgyzstan	2			2
Malaysia	10			10
Mali	8			8
Nepal	6			6
New Zealand	2			2
Nigeria	4	14	3 217	3 235
Norway	5			5
Pakistan	10			10
Russian Federation	15			15
Slovakia	2			2
Sweden	3			3
Thailand	5			5
United Kingdom	15	3		18
United Republic of Tanzania	12			12
Uruguay	11			11
Zambia	11	3	776	790
Total	**260**	**57**	**9 178**	**9 495**

Civilian police deployed (28): Bangladesh (2), Gambia (2), Ghana (3), India (1), Jordan (3), Kenya (1), Malaysia (3), Mali (2), Norway (2), Senegal (2), Namibia (1), Nepal (4), Zimbabwe (2).